



intermountain
restoring hope for children

EXHIBIT 7
DATE 4/13/11
8530

April 13, 2011

MT Legislature--House Judiciary

RE: Support SJ30-Interim study regarding childhood trauma and long term effects on children

Senator Terry Murphy, Chairman:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Todd Garrison and I am the Executive Director of *The ChildWise Institute*, a newly formed Montana non-profit established by Intermountain to address the needs of our state's vulnerable children. Intermountain has provided treatment services and child welfare services to children and families in Montana for over 100 years. In 2010, Intermountain served over 1000 children in communities across Montana.

I believe that *the wellbeing of children is the most important thing on Earth*. There are many pressing issues that need to be resolved in our world today, but unless we make children our top priority now, none of those issues will ever be solved... for it's the children who are our future solutions. The future of Montana is in the hands of its children, and we must assure that they are healthy.

Research has proven* that the first three years of life are the most critical to healthy brain development. Decades of service to young traumatized children by Intermountain also proves that deep emotional distress caused by abuse, neglect, trauma, and a chaotic living environment is difficult to heal. The most important thing we can do as citizens of Montana is to assure that our children are given the best possible chance to be healthy emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. In order to make that possible, we first must fully understand the needs of vulnerable children and their families.

It is this Joint Resolution that can be the conduit to reach that understanding by establishing a committee to perform the study, and subsequently make recommendations to our legislators for positive change.

The most important thing on Earth is the wellbeing of our children. I urge you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, to take this step in demonstrating to the people of Montana that we do take this seriously by supporting SJ30.

Thank you.

(Todd Garrison
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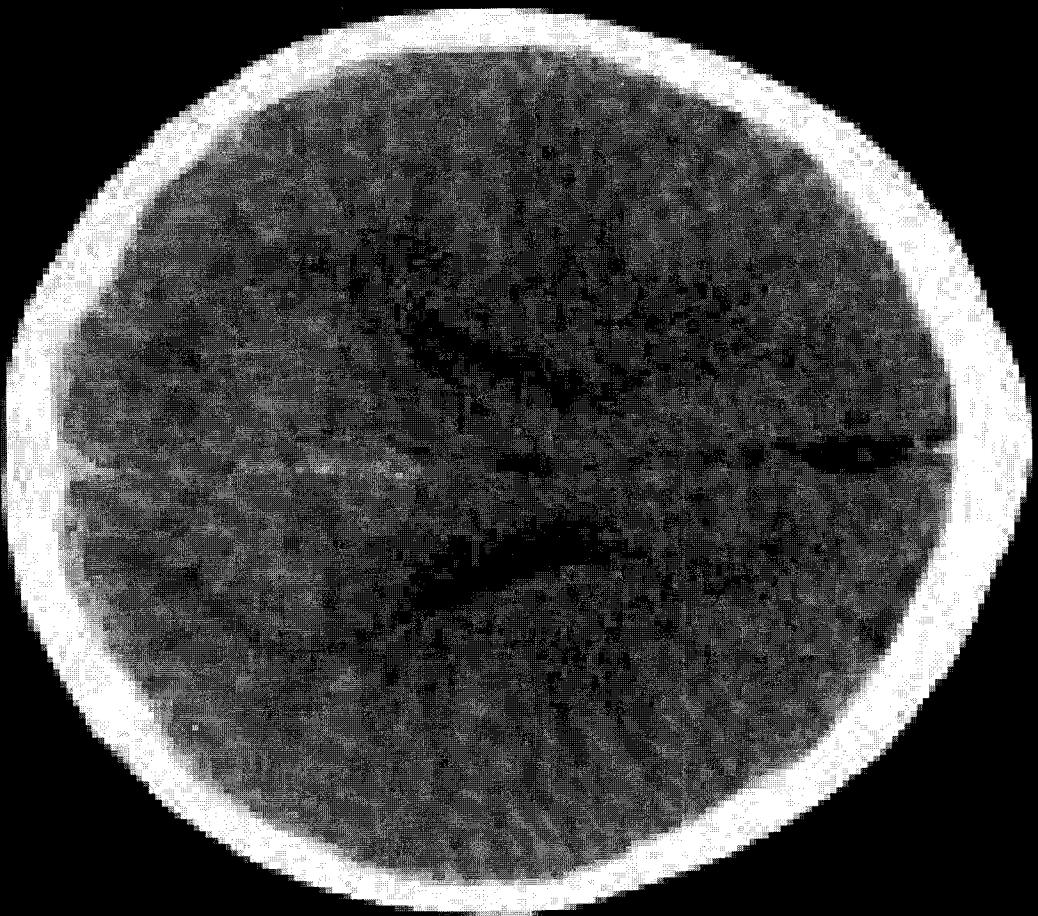
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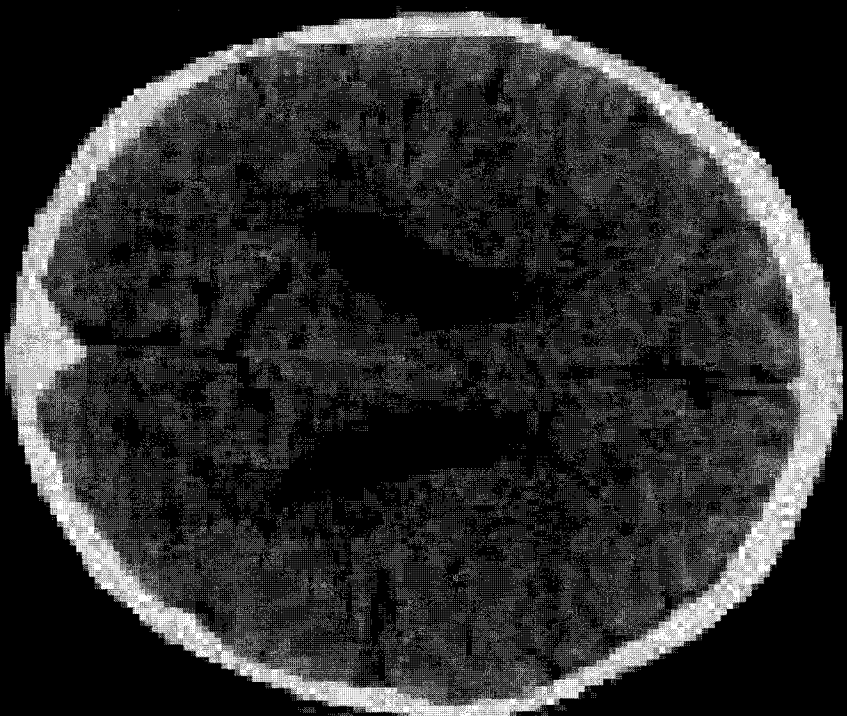


The Joint Commission

3 Year Old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect